

as facilitators in low-income low-performing schools.

A huge challenge for our schools is to help low-achieving students improve their academic performance. How do we make this happen? Many studies have shown that the single most critical component for a child's success is the quality of each teacher.

Districts across the country are struggling with ways to comply with The Elementary and Secondary Education Act, H.R. 1, known as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. It requires that every classroom will have a highly-qualified teacher, but the definition of "highly-qualified" is not clear. The road to creating more highly skilled teachers is also unclear.

However, we do know that teachers who have successfully completed the rigorous, standards-based teaching evaluation and testing program run by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards are 'highly qualified.' What we need to do is to encourage more of these highly accomplished teachers to seek positions in the most needy schools. Low-income, low-performing schools typically have newly hired teachers, many of whom are not fully credentialed or trained in teaching skills.

In California, I authored legislation to reward successful National Board candidates with a \$10,000 merit award. One result of this recognition has been that this year the number of successful candidates was ten times the number in 1998, when the legislation was passed. In addition, the state gives an annual \$5000 pay incentive for four years to each National Board Certified Teacher who seeks assignment to a low-performing school.

I propose to build on this method of providing incentives to urge these highly accomplished teachers to provide not only their fine teaching skills but also their availability as peers for the many new teachers assigned to these schools.

Both beginning teachers and experienced teachers can grow in their teaching skills and can be inspired to accept the challenge of the certification process to demonstrate this growth if they have the opportunity to work as a peer with a National Board Certified Teacher. Many teachers who have become certified report that the process itself improves their skills, as they must prepare standards-based, self-reflective portfolios of their teaching practices to submit for evaluation.

Therefore, I propose a pilot program for five years to pay up to 100 National Board Certified Teachers, each of whom is teaching in a low-income, low-performing school, \$5000 per year to act as a resident facilitator to introduce the members of the faculty to the National Board evaluation progress. As a teacher must have taught for three years before applying for Board certification, the five-year period is needed to allow time for new teachers to be exposed to the process through the outreach program initiated by the facilitator.

The responsibilities of the facilitator would be to promote peer teacher participation and to work with the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards to recommend ways to encourage teachers to aspire to Board certification.

The facilitator would also receive a \$1000 bonus stipend for each teacher who completes the process for becoming Board-certified at the school for which the recipient is the resident facilitator.

I believe that this pilot program can be a triple winner. The children of the low-performing school have another teacher who is clearly a highly qualified teacher. The faculty of that school has a peer teacher with identifiable teaching skills as a resource. And the school may grow its own crop of National Board Certified Teachers thus changing the image of being a low-performing school to the image of being a school with a highly-accomplished faculty.

PROPOSING A GREAT LAKES TRUST FUND

HON. RAHM EMANUEL

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 20, 2003

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, today is Great Lakes Day on Capitol Hill. This annual event provides Great Lakes policymakers and opinion leaders with an opportunity to report on the current and future state of the Lakes. Holding one-fifth of the planet's fresh surface water, the Great Lakes are the source of drinking water for 28 million Americans, including 2.8 million Chicagoans. Today it is my sad duty to inform the Members of this body who are not already aware, that the Great Lakes are in grave danger.

Thirty years after passage of the Clean Water Act, water quality has improved, yet the Lakes remain unhealthy and there is clear and convincing evidence that the ecosystem is deteriorating. In the past few years, state and local authorities have issued more than 1,500 fish consumption advisories. In 2001, bacteria from sewage overflows led to a record 599 beach closings. In Chicago, my home, there have been 152 beach closings since 1994.

Mr. Speaker, the Great Lakes, the largest freshwater system on Earth, are clearly in danger. In the mid-1990s, the Everglades, the source of freshwater for much of the state of Florida, faced a similar crisis. Congress responded with an \$8 billion plan to restore the Everglades. I ask this body, are the Great Lakes, one of our nation's most valued national treasures, not worthy of a similar effort? I know they are.

This spring I will introduce legislation to create a Great Lakes Trust Fund. My bill will fund the Administration's "Great Lakes Strategy 2002." Additionally, it would establish a dedicated funding source for Lakes restoration and revitalization. My proposal would also create an advisory board consisting of the governors of the eight Great Lakes states, representatives of the Federal Government, and members of the scientific and business communities. Further, the advisory panel would be tasked with developing a comprehensive Lakes management plan, a biennial report to Congress.

Mr. Speaker, the United States is blessed with tremendous resources. The Great Lakes undoubtedly rank among the most treasured of these resources, but if this body allows them to deteriorate further—if we can no longer drink the water, and no longer swim at our beaches—we will have failed the people of this nation. I refuse to let this happen. My plan will begin to heal the damage done by years of neglect. I urge my colleagues to support me in this important national endeavor and I strongly encourage them to cosponsor my bill.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO GARY OSIER

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 20, 2003

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Gary Osier of Rifle, Colorado for his contributions to the health of our Nation's forests as a ranger in the United States Forest Service. Gary has lived and worked in Colorado for over twenty years and, as he celebrates his retirement, I would like to rise before you today to thank Gary for his service before this body of Congress and this Nation.

Gary studied forestry under the GI Bill and first accepted a U.S. Forest Service assignment in North Dakota. Spending thirty-two years in the Forest Service, he clearly made a home as Rifle's assistant district ranger. He became an official specialist in forest minerals and an unofficial historian in local Forest Service history. Throughout his career, Gary never shied away from difficult issues as a charter member of the Northwest Colorado Oil and Gas Forum.

Though Gary may be retiring from the Forest Service, he will continue his involvement in issues vital to Colorado. Based out of Rifle, Gary and his wife Mary will supply potable water during fire season to active fire camps on national forest lands from Arizona to Wyoming. Filling a need that became evident last summer during the worst fire season in Colorado history, Gary's company, H2Osiers, will also supply water to municipalities and other entities on a case-by-case basis.

Mr. Speaker, Gary Osier has served as a steward of this country's forests for over thirty years. The pride and enthusiasm of foresters like Gary are vital to the important role of the Forest Service. Today I stand before this body of Congress and this nation to recognize one of the Forest Service's best. Gary's dedication to serving the forests and communities of the West is a credit to himself and to Colorado. I thank him for his service.

TEXAS MOURNS THE LOSS OF STATE REPRESENTATIVE IRMA RANGEL

HON. CIRO D. RODRIGUEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 20, 2003

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Mr. Speaker, this week, the State of Texas lost one of its great voices, a leader with passion and energy working to improve the lives of the people she represented. We mourn the death of Texas Representative Irma Rangel who served nobly in the Texas Legislature for more than 25 years. She was a trailblazer as the first Hispanic woman to be elected to the Texas House of Representatives and the first woman to serve as chair of the Mexican American Legislative Caucus. We will miss her strength, courage, vision, and her straight talk.

A close friend, an advocate for poor families and women in South Texas, Representative Rangel consistently fought to improve the quality and accessibility of education for her constituents. Her advocacy helped create the